



Vartan Gregorian Elementary students cut the ribbon in their new STEAM room.

# CONNECTIONS

NOVEMBER 10, 2022

## SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

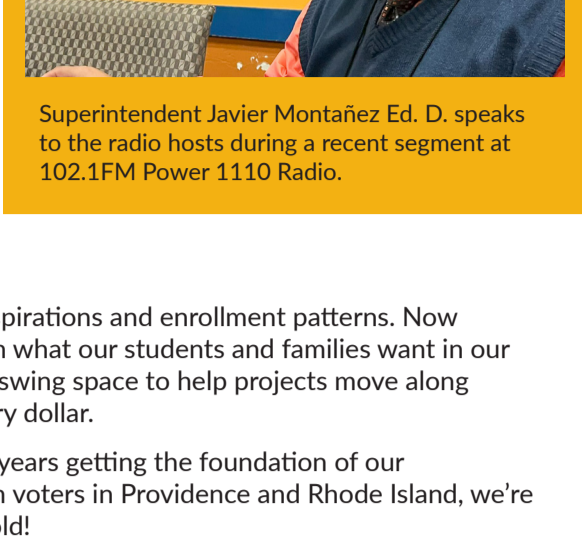
Welcome to the latest edition of the Providence Public School District (PPSD) bi-weekly newsletter! If you or someone you know misses any of our newsletters, you can find past editions on the [District's website](#) in multiple languages.

This week brought exciting news for the future of our district. Voters in Providence approved a \$125 million bond to invest in our schools, and voters statewide approved a \$250 million school construction bond that will also greatly benefit Providence. This gives us the opportunity to upgrade buildings that have gone ignored for decades, and turn them into modern learning facilities.

I truly believe that the next five years will reshape the Providence Public School District as we know it. We can move past Band-Aid fixes and get our students and educators into the 21st century schools they deserve. Right now, just 5% of our school buildings are rated as high quality facilities for learning. That's unacceptable, and it shows the lack of investment that has been made in our city's schools for generations.

With this new opportunity, we must align our investments with our community's aspirations and enrollment patterns. Now that these bonds have passed, we must move quickly to gather community input on what our students and families want in our schools. We must also make sure we move quickly, using time-saving methods like swing space to help projects move along faster. And we also need to be smart with our spending, to get the most out of every dollar.

This is an exciting time for Providence Public Schools. We've spent the last several years getting the foundation of our community's Turnaround Action Plan into place. And with this new investment from voters in Providence and Rhode Island, we're ready to take things to the next level. I can't wait to see what the next few years hold!



Superintendent Javier Montañez Ed. D. speaks to the radio hosts during a recent segment at 102.1FM Power 1110 Radio.

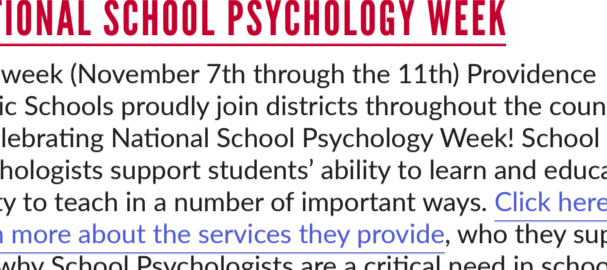
## DISTRICT UPDATES

### SCHOOL CHOICE FAIR

The Providence Public School District's School Choice Fair will be held on **Thursday, November 17**, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Providence Career and Technical Academy (PCTA) located at 41 Fricker Street in Providence. Parents and students can learn important information on Kindergarten, Middle Schools, and High Schools, plus enjoy free food and student entertainment! Log on to [www.providenceschools.org](http://www.providenceschools.org) to learn more.

### NEXT EARLY RELEASE DAY

This is a friendly reminder that all schools will have their next monthly two-hour early dismissal on **Wednesday, November 16**, for teacher professional development. Middle school families should note that this is different from the regular Wednesday dismissal time for middle school students. Middle schools will be dismissed at 12:40 p.m. on November 16, to allow buses to run on time for other schools that are also dismissed early that day. Families should also remember to double check the schedules at local recreation centers, as some may not open until 3 p.m. because of staffing.



### NATIONAL SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY WEEK

This week (November 7th through the 11th) Providence Public Schools proudly join districts throughout the country in celebrating National School Psychology Week! School Psychologists support students' ability to learn and educators' ability to teach in a number of important ways. [Click here to learn more about the services they provide](#), who they support, and why School Psychologists are a critical need in schools. You can also find contact information of School Psychologists in each of our buildings, media coverage of the great work they're doing, and information on the Rhode Island School Psychologist of the Year, who happens to be from PPSD!

## EQUITY IN PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### INTERESTED IN BEING A PART OF PPSD EQUITY & BELONGING INITIATIVES?

The Office of Equity & Belonging is seeking volunteers to join our **Advisory Board**. Parents, students and community members are invited to participate. Our first meeting will be Thursday, December 8, 2022, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Join us to learn more about the group and the work ahead. Please RSVP [here](#) for this informational meeting. We will have interpretation services available at the meeting as well.

### RESPECT STUDENT EQUITY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The **Raising Expectations for Student Perspectives, Experiences, Consciousness, and Traditions (RESPECT) Conference** will take place at the Marriott Hotel located on Orms St. in Providence, from 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., on November 16. The keynote and Facilitator of this session for 60 middle and high school student leaders will be **Mr. William Winfield**, one

### LEADING AND LEARNING WITH DR. GHOLDY MUHAMMAD

On November 30, **Dr. Gholdy Muhammad**, educator and author of *Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy*, will facilitate a virtual work session for teachers and other interested PPSD educators. A number of seats will be reserved for members of the community and parents. Dr. Muhammad offers a unique, culturally, and historically responsive approach to cultivating genius and joy in education. She will present her equity framework, called the HILL Model, to help educators develop students' histories, identities, literacies, and liberations.

## CELEBRATING STUDENTS

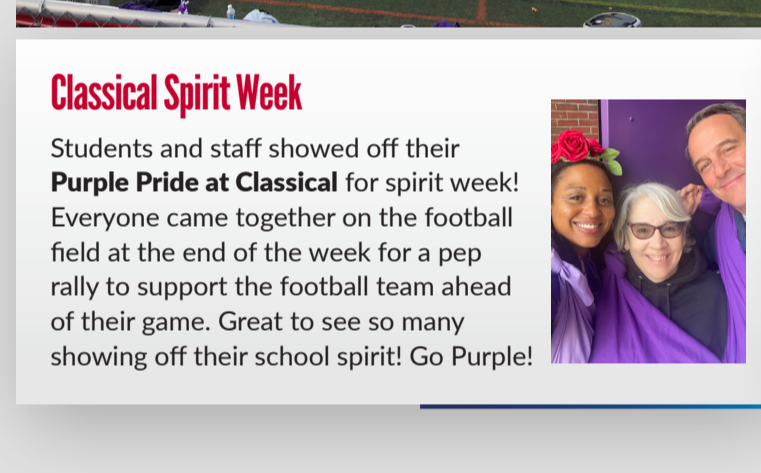
Our hardworking, talented students are doing amazing things every day. Here are just a few examples.



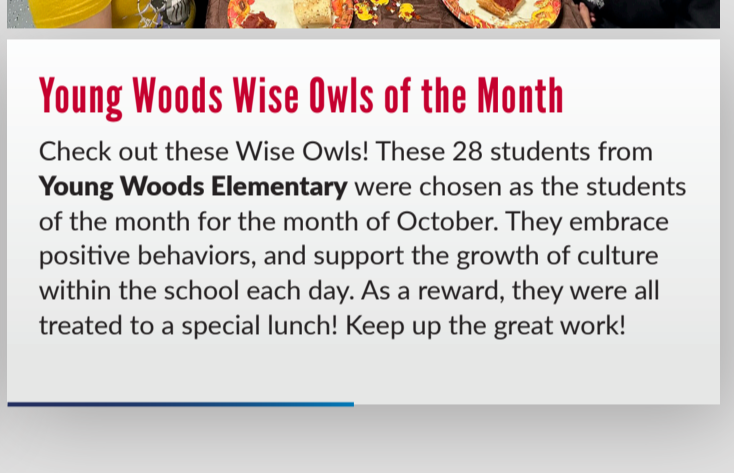
**Nathanael Greene Fall Festival**  
Students and staff at **Nathanael Greene Middle School** were showing off their dance moves and school spirit at their Harvest Festival last week! Students got creative with different craft activities, such as painting pumpkins, and there was plenty of food and entertainment. Even the principal, Dr. Sermons, was dancing to the music! It's safe to say the Harvest Festival was a huge success!



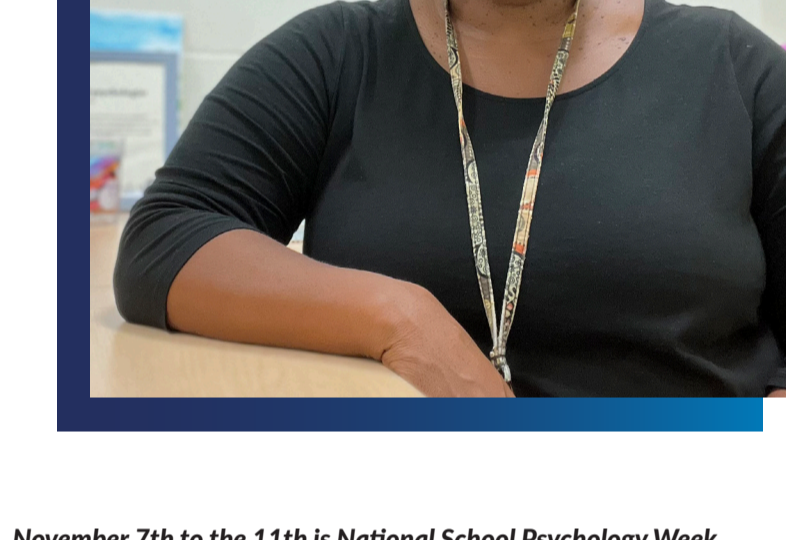
**DelSesto Principal Appreciation**  
October was Principal Appreciation Month, and 6th grade students at **DelSesto Middle School** showed their appreciation for principal Joe Copello with some colorful artwork and notes! Principal Copello is one of the many great principals leading our schools in the District, and the students at DelSesto are thankful for all he does to make the school a safe and fun place to learn.



**Classical Spirit Week**  
Students and staff showed off their **Purple Pride at Classical** for spirit week! Everyone came together on the football field at the end of the week for a pep rally to support the football team ahead of their game. Great to see so many showing off their school spirit! Go Purple!



**Young Woods Wise Owls of the Month**  
Check out these Wise Owls! These 28 students from **Young Woods Elementary** were chosen as the students of the month for the month of October. They embrace positive behaviors, and support the growth of culture within the school each day. As a reward, they were all treated to a special lunch! Keep up the great work!



## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Get to know the amazing people who work with our students every day!

**Dr. Tulani Freeman**

*School Psychologist*

Located in: **Nathan Bishop Middle School**

Joined PPSD in: 2009

### November 7th to the 11th is National School Psychology Week. What does that mean to you as a School Psychologist?

This year's theme is "Together We Shine," and I think that really speaks to the power in partnerships. We can't improve, build, or provide a more supportive environment if we don't do it together. Our community is full of so many smart, committed professionals in Providence. So, this week is an opportunity for our field to let everyone in the community know who we are, how we can be a resource, and bring more connection to the supports that is available.

### What do you hope people learn this week?

I think there is a misconception that School Psychologists or similar support staff only work with certain groups of students. But I have an open-door policy and I try to get to know as many students and staff as possible. I want them all to know they can come to me, bring a friend to me, a parent can reach out, you name it. We're a great resource no matter what the situation and if we don't know, we will help steer you in the right direction. School Psychologists wear many hats. I also want people to know it's a wonderful profession to go into, and there's absolutely a need. As challenging as my role can be, I work with a wonderful set of psychologists, teachers, and support staff. I'm not a native Rhode Islander but Nathan Bishop and PPSD have always felt like home to me. Many of the staff I've worked with and continue to work with are committed to our students' futures and our community. We even have students lead the pledge in the morning, to set that tone for younger kids.

### How would you describe the day-to-day of being a School Psychologist?

It's a little bit of everything, for sure. My colleagues and I laugh – we start the day with a plan, but often it ends up totally different! My best days are when I have my feet on the ground and I'm working with kids. That could be private counseling,

modeling behavior in the classroom, conducting an assessment, running a group or having a restorative conversation. I also set aside time each day during the lunch block to run my quiet lunches for each grade. It's a part of the day where students come to escape the hustle and bustle of the lunchroom. We recently got a GoFundMe approved for games during this time. We called it "Boards for Bored Students" and the kids are thrilled to have all these classic games to interact with. I also spend a lot of time checking in on students to encourage them throughout their day and talking with teachers about classroom management, support plans and general ideas for interaction.

### What do you wish more people knew about the job?

We have a lot more awareness of a society about supporting mental health and social-emotional needs these days, but not enough action and teaching of what that actually looks like. I want of more people to know that School Psychologists can partner with parents, teachers, and students to build those skills. The pandemic really challenged everyone and made it so we're seeing more students with anxiety and relationship issues. There are staff like me who are trained and ready to provide those supports in a proactive way.

### What are some moments you can share that reminded you why you do this work?

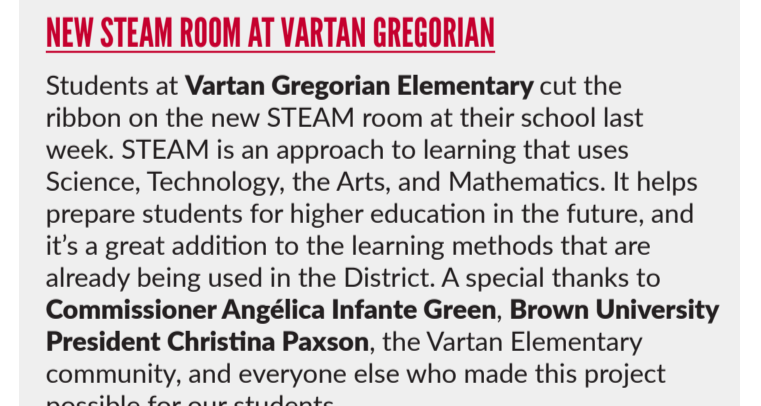
Those moments come often! Sometimes it's a smile from a student who doesn't do so often or a hello from a student whose name I finally remember because I say hello every day. Earlier this year, a social worker at Hope High School called me and said she met a young man I had at Nathan Bishop. During middle school he struggled a great deal. I worked with him every day as a steady support. And the social worker said to me, "he's in 10th grade now, and he wanted me to call you and say thank you. You helped him feel his feelings and manage them, and he said if it weren't for you, he wouldn't be ok now."

**"We can't improve, build, or provide a supportive environment if we don't do it together."**

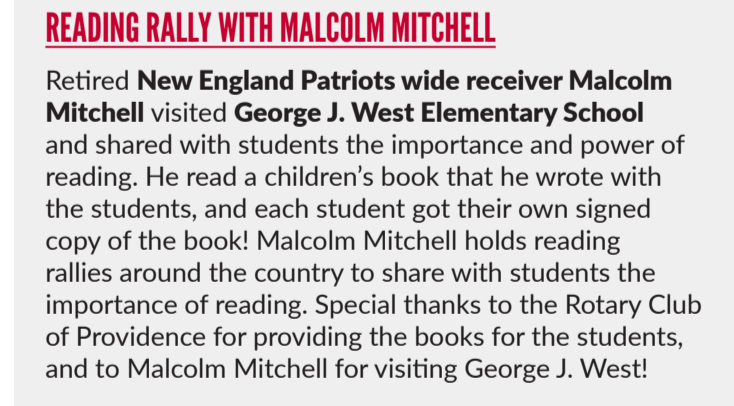
## IT'S GOOD NEWS: PPSD IN THE PRESS

- [Classical Alum Jeremy Peña Named World Series MVP, Leads Astros To 2022 Title](#) ABC6, November 5
- [Chronic absenteeism improving at Providence schools](#) WPRJ, October 28
- [Vartan Gregorian's new STEAM Lab](#) Providence Journal, October 28
- [Esek Hopkins Middle School supports family displaced by fire](#) WJAR, October 26
- [Former Patriots wide receiver Malcolm Mitchell visits Providence elementary school](#) ABC6, October 25

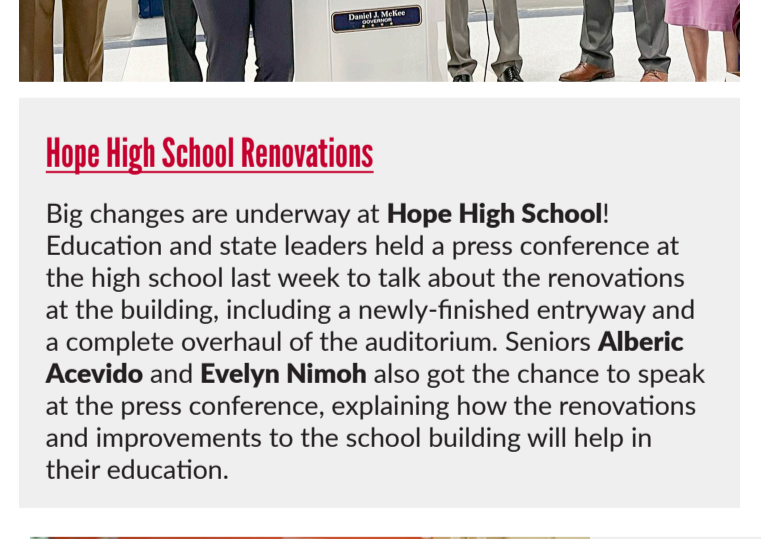
## AROUND THE DISTRICT



**NEW STEAM ROOM AT VARTAN GREGORIAN**  
Students at **Vartan Gregorian Elementary** cut the ribbon on the new STEAM room at their school last week. STEAM is an approach to learning that uses Science, Technology, the Arts, and Mathematics. It helps prepare students for higher education in the future, and it's a great addition to the learning methods that are already being used in the District. A special thanks to **Commissioner Angélica Infante Green, Brown University President Christina Paxson**, the Vartan Elementary community, and everyone else who made this project possible for our students.



**READING RALLY WITH MALCOLM MITCHELL**  
Retired **New England Patriots wide receiver Malcolm Mitchell** visited **George J. West Elementary School** and shared with students the importance and power of reading. He read a children's book that he wrote with the students, and each student got their own signed copy of the book! Malcolm Mitchell holds reading rallies around the country to share with students the importance of reading. Special thanks to the Rotary Club of Providence for providing the books for the students, and to Malcolm Mitchell for visiting George J. West!



**Hope High School Renovations**  
Big changes are underway at **Hope High School!** Education and state leaders held a press conference at the high school last week to talk about the renovations at the building, including a newly-finished entryway and a complete overhaul of the auditorium. Seniors **Alberic Acevido** and **Evelyn Nimoh** also got the chance to speak at the press conference, explaining how the renovations and improvements to the school building will help in their education.



**Jeremy Peña Wins World Series MVP**  
Congratulations to 2015 **Classical High School** graduate **Jeremy Peña** of the Houston Astros, who was awarded **World Series MVP** after leading his team to the championship! The rookie shortstop was previously awarded the 2022 ALCS MVP award, prior to the World Series. He's also the first rookie shortstop to earn an American League Gold Glove. We can't wait to see what he does next season!



**360 AND JSEC COLLEGE & CAREER FAIR**  
Students from **360 Academy** and **JSEC** took part in a joint college and career fair this week. Different area colleges came to show students what their institutions had to offer. Different careers and companies were also represented at the fair, such as the Rhode Island State Police, Electric Boat, and more. Students got to explore the many different options that are available to them after they graduate high school. The future is bright!

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

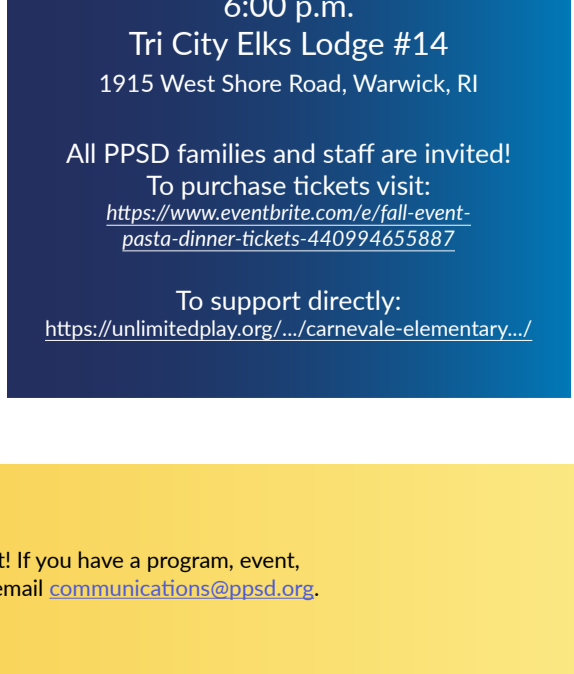
- **VETERANS DAY** (NO SCHOOL) Friday, November 11
- **Early Release** Wednesday, November 16
- **SCHOOL BOARD MEETING** Wednesday, November 16
- **SCHOOL CHOICE FAIR** Thursday, November 17
- **THANKSGIVING RECESS** (NO SCHOOL) November 23 - 25



### NOVEMBER SCHOOL MENU

#### SODEXO NEWS

Click [this link to join](#) our PPSD Parent Food Service Working Group today to support our meetings and give feedback on school meals!



### Support Anthony Carnevale Elementary School's new all-inclusive playground!

#### PASTA DINNER

November 11th  
6:00 p.m.  
Tri City Elks Lodge #14  
1915 West Shore Road, Warwick, RI

All PPSD families and staff are invited!  
To purchase tickets visit: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fall-event-pasta-dinner-tickets-440994655887>  
To support directly: <https://unlimitedplay.org/.../carnevale-elementary-/>

Terrific things are happening across the District, and we want to get the word out! If you have a program, event, staff member, or student with an amazing story that you'd like to highlight, please email [communications@ppsd.org](mailto:communications@ppsd.org).

